

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 TEHRAN 10641 021202Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /092 W
-----031768 022216Z /64

R 010153Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5697
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 10641

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, IR, CH
SUBJ: HIGH LEVEL PRC DELEGATION VISITS IRAN

1. ON NOVEMBER 26 TENG YING-CHAO, WIDOW OF CHOU EN-LAI AND VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF THE PRC, ARRIVED IN TEHRAN AT THE HEAD OF A HIGH LEVEL DELEGATION WHICH INCLUDES VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS HO YING, MFA ACTING DIRECTOR OF THE WEST ASIAN AND NORTH AFRICAN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT CHOU CHUEH AND MFA DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF THE PROTOCOL DEPARTMENT KAO CHIEN CHUNG. THE DELEGATION IS OFFICIALLY THE GUEST OF PRINCESS FATEMEH, HALF-SISTER OF THE SHAH, AND THEIR VISIT IS IN RESPONSE TO PRINCESS ASHRAF'S 1976 VISIT TO THE PRC. FATEMEH HERSELF VISITED THE PRC IN 1971.

2. THE VISIT HAS BEEN RECEIVING AN EXTRAORDINARY AMOUNT OF PUBLICITY IN THE LOCAL MEDIA BEGINNING WITH TENG'S AIRPORT ARRIVAL STATEMENT IN WHICH SHE STRESSED THE LONG-STANDING FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN CHINA AND IRAN. THE PRESS HAS PROVIDED DAILY COVERAGE OF THE DELEGATION'S ACTIVITIES WHICH HAVE INCLUDED A TEA RECEPTION BY COURT
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEHRAN 10641 021202Z

MINISTER HOVEYDA, A BANQUET BY PRINCESS FATEMEH, A DINNER BY PRIME MINISTER AMOUZEGAR, A LUNCHEON BY PRINCESS ASHRAF AND MEETINGS WITH SENATE PRESIDENT JAAFAR SHARIF-EMAMI AND MAJLIS SPEAKER ABDOLLAH RIAZI. IN ADDITION, TWO MFA REPRESENTATIVES, HO YING AND CHOU CHUEH, CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER KHALATBARY. THAT MEETING WAS CHARACTERIZED BY NCNA AS "CORDIAL AND

FRIENDLY"-- THE CONTINUING PUBLIC THEME OF THE VISIT.

3. DELEGATION WAS GIVEN TOUR OF HISTORIC AND CULTURAL SITES IN ISFAHAN AND SHIRAZ AND IS SCHEDULED TO MEET WITH SHAH TODAY PRIOR TO THEIR DEPARTURE TOMORROW.

4. THE FRENCH-LANGUAGE DAILY, JOURNAL DE TEHRAN, ON NOV. 28 COMMENTED EDITORIALY THAT THE TENG VISIT SURPASSED A ROUTINE BILATERAL EXHCANGE OF VISITS, NOTING THAT SHE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY AN IMPORTANT MFA OFFICIAL AND HIS CLOSEST COLLABORATORS. BOTH IN THEIR EDITORIAL AND IN A FEATURE STORY THE JOURNAL REFERRED TO TENG'S ROLE EARLIER THIS YEAR AS "AMBASSADRESS" TO BURMA AND SRI LANKA REPRESENTING "THE CALM AND SECURITY FOUND AGAIN IN CHINA AFTER A LONG PERIOD OF TROUBLES". NOV. 29 ENGLISH-LANGUAGE EDITION OF JOURNAL EDITORIALY REVIEWED GROWING TRADE TIES BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES AND CONCLUDED THAT, "THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN RIAN AND CHINA WILL BE A MODEL FOR ANY TWO COUNTRIES KEEN ON HAVING THE BEST OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THEM DESPITE DIFFERENT POLITICAL SYSTEMS".

5. COMMENT: WIDESPREAD PUBLICITY SURROUNDING VISIT GIVES INITIAL IMPRESSION THAT THERE MAY BE LESS TO THIS VISIT THAN MEETS THE EYE. COURT MINISTER HOVEYDA CHARACTERIZED VIST TO DCM AS LARGELY "CEREMONIAL",
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PAGE 03 TEHRAN 10641 021202Z

RECIPROCATING EARLIER HIGH LEVEL GOI VISITS TO CHINA. HOVEYDA SAID TENG DESCRIBED SITUATION IN CHINA AS BETTER NOW THAT "GANG OF FOUR" ARE ON THE SIDELINES AND THAT THERE IS MORE DELGATION OF RESPONSIBILITY THAN BEFORE. TENG REITERATED TO THE COURT MINISTER THE TRADITIONAL PRC CLICHES VIS-A-VIS THE USSR BUT DID NOT HAVE MUCH TO SAY ABOUT THE U.S., HOVEYDA WAS INTERESTED TO NOTE. THE MINISTER SAID THAT IT IS POSSIBLE SOMETHING OF SUBSTANCE MIGHT ARISE FROM THAT MEETING. WE SUSPECT IT IS UNLIKELY THAT SUCH AN IMPORTANT FIGURE AS HO YING WOULD BE INCLUDED IN THE DELEGATION IF NO ISSUES OF SUBSTANCE WERE TO BE DISCUSSED DURING THE VISIT. WE SHALL FOLLOW UP AND SEE IF THERE IS ANYTHING TO GATHER AFTER THEY HAVE GONE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: VISITS, MEETING DELEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 01-Dec-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977TEHRAN10641
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770448-0433
Format: TEL
From: TEHRAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197712103/aaaadjon.tel
Line Count: 109
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: eae6cefb-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10-Jan-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 109489
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: HIGH LEVEL PRC DELEGATION VISITS IRAN
TAGS: PFOR, OVIP, PDEV, IR, CH
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/eae6cefb-c188-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009